

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 14191 131715Z

44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SY-05 OPR-02 OC-05 CCO-00

OMB-01 AID-05 PER-01 SCS-03 SCA-01 CAB-02 COME-00

DOT-00 EB-07 FAA-00 A-01 SAM-01 SCCT-01 ACDA-05 /113 W

----- 124828

O 131450Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7275

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

DIA WASHDC

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 14191 131715Z

CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 14191

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, LE

SUBJECT: SECURITY DETERIORATES; POLITICAL INTEREST CENTERS ON
VATICAN AND FRENCH INITIATIVES

REF: BEIRUT 14057 (10 NOV 75 1430Z)

1. SUMMARY: A SIGNIFICANT DOWNTURN IN SECURITY OVER PAST 48 HOURS HAS RAISED FEARS AMONG BEIRUTIS AND BROUGHT INCIPIENT ECONOMIC RESURGENCE TO HALT. CARDINAL BERTOLI IS NOW MAKING ROUND OF CONTACTS HERE ON BEHALF OF VATICAN AND COUVE DE MURVILLE EXPECTED SOON TO START FRENCH INITIATIVE TO HELP SETTLE CRISIS. CABINET AND POLITICAL SUBCOMMITTEE OF "NATIONAL DIALOGUE" HOLD MEETINGS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SECURITY SITUATION IN BEIRUT SUFFERED A MARKED DOWNTURN OVER PAST 48 HOURS, DUE PRINCIPALLY TO A RASH OF KIDNAPINGS AT MOBILE ROADBLOCKS ERECTED BY BOTH CHRISTIAN/RIGHTIST AND MOSLEM/LEFTIST GROUPS. ONE SOURCE TOLD DATT THAT NOT LESS THAN 300 PERSONS WERE KIDNAPPED YESTERDAY, NOV 12. MANY HAVE SINCE BEEN RELEASED, BUT BY NO MEANS ALL. THE DISCOVERY OF BODIES OF PERSONS KILLED BY UNKNOWN ELEMENTS HAS LIKEWISE HEIGHTENED TENSIONS.

3. SUSTAINED EXCHANGES OF FIRE AGAIN TOOK PLACE NIGHT NOV 12-13 IN SEVERAL LOCALITIES IN AND AROUND BEIRUT. THE SOUTHERN SUBURBS OF HADATH (CHRISTIAN) AND LEILEKE (MIXED CHRISTIAN AND SHIITE WITH SOME PALESTINIAN REJECTIONIST AND PPS LEFTIST PRESENCE) WERE ESPECIALLY TUBULENT. THE QUARTERS OF NABAA, SIN EL-FIL, AIN EL-RUMANNEH, AND CHIYAH WERE ALSO BACK IN THE NEWS AS HOT SPOTS DURING THE NIGHT. THE SEVERE FIGHTING HAD DIED DOWN BY DAYLIGHT TODAY, NOV 13. AN INTERNAL SECURITY FORCE (ISF) SOURCE TOLD EMBOFF AT NOON THAT INCIDENTS HAD FALLEN OFF CONSIDERABLY DURING THE MORNING AND RELATIVE CALM PREVAILED, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF HADATH WHERE TRAVEL BY ROAD REMAINED UNSAFE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 14191 131715Z

4. TWO ARMED MEN ENTERED MAINTENANCE AREA AT BEIRUT AIRPORT AT 0745 HOURS THIS MORNING. THEY WERE CHALLENGED AND KILLED BY SECURITY GUARDS (SEE BEIRUT 14163 (NOTAL). THIS INCIDENT HAS CAUSED CONSIDERABLE WORRY AT ISF HEADQUARTERS, AS FURTHER ATTEMPTS IN AND AROUND AIRPORT HARE FEARED. FIGHTING AND PERSISTENCE OF ARMED ELEMENTS AROUND HADATH AND LEILEKE, NEAR AIRPORT, ADD TO THIS CONCERN.

5. ECONOMICALLY, THE COUNTRY REPEATED IN LAST FEW DAYS NOW-FAMILIAR CYCLE OF INCIPIENT ECONOMIC RESURGENCE BEING BROUGHT TO HALT BY DETERIORATION OF SECURITY CONDITIONS. FIRST OF WEEK, AN INCREASED NUMBER OF SHOPS WERE OPEN, AND PORT AND INDUSTRIES BEGAN OPERATING FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SEVERAL WEEKS. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF KIDNAPPINGS YESTERDAY, BANKS ARE CLOSED TODAY AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES ARE AGAIN AT MINIMUM LEVEL.

6. SUGGESTION THAT GOL IMPOSE RESTRICTIONS ON CAPITAL EXPORTS WAS INCLUDED IN LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS FORMULATED BY WORKING LEVEL GROUP ON WAYS TO MEET CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS. SIGNIFICANCE OF SUCH A SUGGESTION FOR LEBANON, WHOSE WHOLE ECONOMY BASED ON COMPLETE FREEDOM OF CAPITAL MOVEMENTS, OBVIOUSLY NOT FULLY REALIZED BY WORKING GROUP. WHEN MATTER LATER CAME TO ATTENTION OF CENTRAL BANK GOVERNOR, HE TOOK IMMEDIATE AND VIGOROUS STEPS TO HAVE PRIMIN FORMALLY DENY ANY INTENTION OF GOL TO IMPOSE RESTRICTIONS ON CAPITAL MOVEMENTS.

7. INTER-BANK EXCHANGE RATE SANK EIGHT PIASTRES TUESDAY TO 2.32 LL PER DOLLAR. ACCORDING TO BANKING SOURCES, DECLINE WAS DUE TO FACT BANKS NOT TAKING POSITIONS THEMSELVES AND THEREFORE SMALL MARKET RESPONDED TO DEMAND FOR POUND (ESTIMATED AT ABOUT SIX TO SEVEN MILLION DOLLARS PRINCIPALLY FROM LIBYA AND GULF STATES) AND OVERWHELMED SUPPLY OF POUNDS FROM LIMITED CAPITAL OUTFLOW (ESTIMATED AT ABOUT THREE MILLION DOLLARS). WEDNESDAY RATE RETURNED TO 2.38.

8. MINISTER OF LABOR TUEINI EMPHASIZED IN PRESS INTERVIEW MAJOR ECONOMIC PROBLEM ARISING FROM FIGHTING IS UNEMPLOYMENT. GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF LABOR ISSUED STATEMENT YESTERDAY SAYING THAT 1) IT OPPOSED THE DISMISSAL OF ANY EMPLOYEES IN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS, AND 2) FULL SALARY SHOULD BE PAID FOR ABSENCES CAUSED BY FIGHTING. BUSINESS COMMUNITY, ON THE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 14191 131715Z

OTHER HAND, IS TAKING POSITION THAT FIRMS WHICH WERE DAMAGED OR DESTROYED HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE TO DISMISSING LARGE NUMBERS OF EMPLOYEES BUT THAT THEY WULD PAY FULL SALARIES FOR TIME MISSED AND PAY TERMINATION INDEMNITIES REQUIRED BY LAW. FIRMS WHICH ARE OPERATIONAL BUT OVERSTAFFED WOULD GIVE HALF-PAY TO REDUNDANT EMPLOYEES AND FOR TIME MISSED BECAUSE OF VILENCE.

9. POLITICAL INTEREST PAST SEVERAL DAYS HAS CENTERED ON MISSION OF CARDINAL BERTOLI, VATICAN ENVOY WHO ARRIVED NOV 9. HE HAS TALKED TO A WIDE RANGE OF POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS FIGURES AND IS EXPECTED TO SEE MORE BEFORE DEPARTING THIS WEEK-END OR EARLY NEXT WEEK. NO CONCRETE RESULTS OF THIS "MEDIATION" EFFORT ARE REVEALED YET, BUT BERTOLI HAS REPORTEDLY SAID THAT LEBANESE MUST MAKE THEIR OWN INTERNAL POLITICAL ARRANGE-

MENTS. ONE VERSION OF BERTOLI'S PURPOSE WIDELY BELIEVED HERE IS THAT HE IS BASICALLY ON FACT-FINDING MISSION AND, IF HE TAKES INITIATIVES AT ALL, WILL SIMPLY ENCOURAGE "DIALOGUE" AND SPIRIT OF ACCOMMODATION BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND MOSLEMS TO END STRIFE AND SUSTAIN LEBANESE CO-EXISTENCE CONCEPT.

10. ANNOUNCEMENT FROM YESTERDAY'S CABINET MEETING THAT GOL ACCEPTS FRENCH OFFER OF MEDIATION COMES AS SURPRISE IN VIEW PREMIER KARAME'S EVIDENT RELUCTANCE TO "INTERNATIONALIZE" CRISIS IN THIS WAY. CABINET ACCEPTANCE WAS REPORTEDLY IN PRINCIPLE ONLY, TAKEN AT INITIATIVE FONMIN TAQLA WHO REMINDED COLLEAGUES THAT FRENCH OFFER PENDING AND NEEDED RESPONSE. HOWEVER, COUVE DE MURVILLE EXPECTED TO ARRIVE SOON TO START FRENCH EFFORT. SPECULATION EXISTS THAT BERTOLI AND COUVE MISSIONS OPERATING IN TANDEM.

11. SPECIAL MEETING OF CABINET IS SCHEDULED FOR SAT, NOV 15 TO DISCUSS POLITICAL REFORMS. PREMIER KARAME IS STUDYING A REFORM PROGRAM OF HIS OWN AND MAY PRESENT IT AT THAT TIME.

12. POLITICAL SUBCOMMITTEE OF "NATIONAL DIALOGUE" MET YESTERDAY, ALTHOUGH MOST OF STAR PARTICIPANTS WERE ABSENT INCLUDING JUMBLATT AND GEMAYEL. DISCUSSION CENTERED LARGELY ON CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL REVISIONS TO ELIMINATE CONFESSIONALISM IN GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS. THOUGH NO FINAL DECISIONS TAKEN, SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTEDLY NEARING AGREEMENT TO RECOMMEND AMONG CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 BEIRUT 14191 131715Z

OTHER THINGS ABOLITION OF ARTICLE 95 OF CONSTITUTION, WHICH SAYS THAT "SECTS SHALL BE EQUITABLY REPRESENTED IN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT" AS PROVISIONAL MEASURE. (THIS "PROVISIONAL" ARTICLE HAS BEEN IN EFFECT IN PRESENT FORM SINCE SINCE LEBANESE INDEPENDENCE.) SUBCOMMITTEE SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE SAT, NOV 15. GODLEY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: KIDNAPPING, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, PHYSICAL SECURITY, PROGRESS REPORTS, CIVIL DISORDERS, MEETINGS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BEIRUT14191
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750395-0867
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751148/aaaabqea.tel
Line Count: 207
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BEIRUT 14057
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 JUN 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <14 OCT 2003 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SECURITY DETERIORATES; POLITICAL INTEREST CENTERS ON VATICAN AND FRENCH INITIATIVES
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, LE, FR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006